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ALTHOUGH color is much more freely used on the exterior of our American houses than it is in England, still it is very seldom that the more brilliant hues are seen, and the tendency is toward the use of secondary and tertiary colors rather than toward the primaries. In this we are inclined to follow English precedent rather than to adopt the practice of those countries whose climate and atmospheric effects more nearly correspond with our own.

IN Italy the white plastered houses are frequently decorated with pictures of saints in vivid colors, and even landscapes or purely decorative designs are depicted on the outside walls of the houses; while the churches are frequently ornamented with many-hued mosaics. Against the bright blue sky, so like our own brilliant atmosphere, such decorations as these prove remarkably effective. There seems no reason, then, why we should not learn a lesson from the Italian builders, who have wrought so ably under conditions similar to our own, instead of following the practice of the English architects and architectural critics, whose ideas are developed in a land of mist and gray skies.

IT is true that we have in a measure created a color school of our own for our wooden domestic architecture; but we have failed so far to utilize the opportunities offered for the application of exterior color in decorative forms, and we have confined our exterior painting to ordinary house painting in but few broad colors, limiting any attempt at decoration to such picking out of chamfers or moldings as the ordinary workman can accomplish.

When we have desired to use ornament on our house exteriors we have been apt to confine it to sculptured or modeled form, and to make it purely architectural, rather than decorative, in its treatment. In our modern terra cotta work some very pleasing color effects have been obtained, but these do not serve to accent the ornament in any way. A few scattered examples, here and there in our cities, show the use of eucatite tile, in brilliant colors, mostly in contrast with red brick, but as a rule the brilliant glazed surface has rendered these decorations out of key with the dull texture of the rest of the building materials employed; nor is such a scheme suitable for

any other but brick architecture. Were the whole building of glazed brick or terra cotta the effect would be much more harmonious and pleasing.

IN Germany and Switzerland color is introduced in the exterior decorations of the wooden houses in the form of illuminated mottoes and Scripture texts and in armorial bearings; and here we may find a hint that might serve us in good stead, for in such decorations the most brilliant colors are not forbidden to us; and pure reds and blues, combined with gold and silver, or aluminum, are permissible. The Japanese houses, with their lavish use of color, also afford us an example that we may study with profit.

SOME of our younger architects, indeed, have availed themselves of the opportunity to use brilliant colors in heraldic designs with great success. In a remodeled Philadelphia building on one of the old-fashioned residence streets the woodwork of the store front, in the free classic style of the Colonial period, has been painted a deep cream color, upon which heraldic lions appear on shield-shaped bosses in bright scarlet and blue. Against the red brickwork of the front several wrought iron figures of heraldic lions show the same brilliant coloring. The deep, projecting Spanish-like eaves shield a recessed balcony, the side walls of which have been colored a deep rich blue, peppered with a diaper work of golden fleur-de-lis. Between the cream white rafter ends the roof boards have been painted with an ornamental pattern in brilliant colors. The whole effect of the front is rich and strikingly at variance with the plain and somber old-fashioned houses that flank it, or the more pretentious modern edifices that display the reaction against the Quaker plainness which characterizes all the older buildings.

SOME of the newer country houses in the suburban villages around Philadelphia have been built of stone as far as the second story, above which the rough brick walls have been plastered with cool gray cement. In one of these the architects have introduced circular and shield-shaped panels, upon which the decorator has stenciled—in brilliant red, blue and gold tones—heraldic lions, vases and ribbons, eagles or fabulous birds like the phoenix, and in one circular panel over the front door appears a brilliant-hued peacock of Byzantine design. The effect of these decorations, in spite of their strong color, is soft and beautiful and in excellent taste. There seems to be no reason, however, why they should be confined to plastered surfaces, for a well-laid brick wall lends itself equally well to stencil decoration, and here green tones and dull yellows may be used to advantage, as well as brilliant reds, all of which would contrast agreeably with the darker red of the bricks. Even on our wooden houses stencil decoration may be applied effectively, provided the designs chosen are such as will harmonize with the shape of the surface upon which they are applied. For the ordinary clap board surface it would be manifestly impossible to use the same designs that are proper to use on the flat surface of a plastered wall; nor would it be advisable in most cases to attempt to stencil on such a surface. It would be better, indeed, to introduce special panels into the architectural design for the purpose of receiving the stenciled decorations, or to place them on the cornice or frieze of the main roof or the porch.

IF our American architects and decorators would only learn the value and use of color decorations for exterior work we would be able to introduce a very pleasing feature into our house designs that would add another beauty and picturesque charm to our architecture, that has already reached a high rate of excellence, especially in our country dwelling houses, that have commanded the admiration of competent critics from the Old World.

ABOVE stairs great simplicity should be given sway. The cottage bedroom requires to be restful and inviting but not ornate. Charming draperies for these rooms are shown on every side, but among them all nothing is more com-

pletely suitable than the new figured denims. They are woven in all the best tints and show really artistic designs, while in fifty-inch width they cost only sixty cents a yard. For bedroom portieres they are as nearly perfect as can be, and either they or the new linen material known as Armenian stripe, or Louis XVI., according to design, cannot fail to give satisfaction. The latter are somewhat more expensive, being sold for one dollar and a half a yard, but as they do not exceed the limit allowed they may well be suggested for the guest room at least. The denims are in every way suited to any other and can be found in a variety of colors, although in order to give all the choice possible it may be well to mention the multitude of good things to be found under the names of Monis tapestry, Persian points and Colonial chintz, all of which range in price from sixty cents to one dollar and a half a yard and are charming in their way. The sash curtains, and indeed all the window hangings, cannot be better than made of simple frilled Swiss muslin, which is always dainty, cool and inviting.

APROPOS of the sky-parlor described by Mrs. Poole in the present issue the idea possesses significance in regard to the possibilities of roof gardens in large cities.

So long as people are gregarious and Bellamy's dreams are impractical, so long as land is sold at three or four figures the running foot, there will be structures soaring heavenward beyond the possibility of the enjoyment of nature by its occupants. Children are born and reared in the shade, or within walls where nothing is visible save man-made handiwork. Those who love the soil, from which they have been transplanted by the exigencies of life, often experience a heart-hunger which signals the deadliest nostalgia—a yearning for grass and flowers and all the wild green growths that spring up by the wayside. The nicely-kept and sheared squares, the rambles and trees of Central Park and its smaller congeries to some little extent satisfy this longing.

But when a man comes from the stress of business or professional life to an eyrie perched high above the pavement it would be beyond expression a solace and delight to ascend a story or two and find himself in a roof garden and its pavilion, beyond the dust and confusion of the nether world. Why cannot he take his ease with slippers and book in a place undisputed by noisy gamins and all the traffic and uproar below him?

It would be easy to transport upward sufficient soil to make a pleasure ground that would rival the hanging gardens of Babylon. These were nothing else than roof gardens.

Those which are so popular in summer evenings are both artificial and open to the public. Let us suppose the major portions of the top of a tall, massive building was devoted to similar purposes, save that it was restricted to the tenants of the apartments and their friends. A shallow depth of soil, properly watered, drained and shaded in mid-day heat, would afford conditions for flowering plants, plots of grass and small shrubs. Casks and barrels would hold a depth of earth sufficient for larger shrubs, roses and vines, between which the "pleached alleys" of the old novelists, edged with occasional seats, would offer charming places for walking and resting.

The practicability of such a roof garden has been proved. It follows that the structure must be well built, and not too densely populated, both of which restrictions ought always to prevail within the pale of civilization. Can it be doubted that health and morality would thereby be subserved?

A central pavilion, larger but somewhat on the plan of that herewith described, would offer a retreat from storm while yet enjoying this aerial pleasure. It should be furnished in a simple yet artistic manner. If the garden were of small extent jade green or willow green would harmonize with the limited landscape, and seem to enlarge the environment. Otherwise Delft blue with much ivory white would be attractive as a color scheme.

There would be certain rules in regard to the manner and extent to which it would be open to the denizens of the different apartments. All this would be settled by the dictates of order and good morals. That such a scheme would make the apartment house or the office building not only a financial success but a most desirable and healthful living and working home hardly requires to be demonstrated.